

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 2551

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAG UC PINT, PINS, CB

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON TEACHER AGITATORS

REF: PHNOM PENH 2517

1. FANK COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ INFORMS US THAT A HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON THE TEACHERS STRIKE PROBLEM YESTERDAY (FEBRUARY 19) RESULTED ONLY IN THE POSTPONEMENT OF GOVERNMENT ACTION FOR ANOTHER TEN DAYS.

2. THE MEETING, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL, THE PRIME MINISTER, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, THE PRESIDENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND THE SENATE, AND THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, HEARD A MINISTRY OF EDUCATION/NATIONAL POLICE ESITMATE OF TEACHER ATTITUDES WHICH PLACED A RELATIVELY SMALL GROUP IN THE RADICAL LEFT CATEGORY, A SLIGHTLY

LARGER GROUP IN THE PRO-GOVERNMENT CAMP AND A VERY LARGE MAJORITY IN BETWEEN THESE TWO POLES. THE NATIONAL POLICE INTERROGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STRIKE COMMITTEE REVEALED THAT, WHILE ALL AGREED ON THE PARAGRAPHS CONCERNING ECONOMIC GRIVENANCES IN THE ORGANIZATION'S VIRULENT FEBRKARY 6 DELCARATION, MANY DISASSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM
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THE POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS EXPRESSED IN THE DOCUMENT.

3. ACCORDING TO SOSTHENE, HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL MEMBER SIRIK MATAK ARGUED STRONGLY THAT RADICAL TEACHER LEADERS

SHOULD BE ARRESTED IMMEDIATELY AND THAT CONCURRENTLY THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GRANT TEACHERS FURTHER SALARY BENEFITS. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET NOTED THAT THE BUDGET COULD NOT SUPPORT A WAGE RAISE, AND THE GROUP AGREED TO ADVANCE ONCE AGAIN THE PROPOSAL THAT TEACHERS FORM THEMSELVES INTO PRODUCTION ASSOCIATIONS FOR WHICH SPECIAL LAON FUNDING WOULD BE ESTABLISHED. PRESIDENT LON NOL PROPOSED THAT NO

MOVES BE TAKEN AGAINST RADICAL TEACHERS UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT HAS A BETTER PICTURE OF THE POLITICAL INCLINATIONS AND THUS THE REACTION TO BE EXPECTED FROM THE TEACHERS. HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT CHENG HENG, THE TWO PARLIAMENTARY PRESIDENTS, AND SOSTHENE DID NOT EXPRESS ANY VIEWS. THE MARSHAL'S POSITION THUS PREDICTABLY PREVAILED, AND A DECISION WAS POSTPONED FOR TEN DAYS. THE MINISTRY OF EDQZATION WAS CHARGED WITH PRODUCING BETTER INTELLIGENCE ON TEACHERS' VIEWS FOR CONSIDERATION ON MARCH 1.
ENDERS

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